

Halo: All or Nothing (Book 1: Reach)

by Mythic Wolf Productions

Category: Halo

Genre: Friendship, Sci-Fi

Language: English

Characters: SPARTAN-B312/Noble Six

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2013-01-26 01:43:03

Updated: 2013-08-14 01:51:34

Packaged: 2016-04-27 04:00:04

Rating: M

Chapters: 5

Words: 15,292

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: The story you know so well, but with new Dead Space-esque death scenes! Follow the exploits of the former SPARTAN-II Epsilon team as they are drafted to Noble team. As a replacement for Thom-293, Brian-113, a SPARTAN-II commando, will join his best friend, Kevin-321, in the defense of one of humanities most important colonies. "Welcome to Reach." Jun-A266

1. Disclaimer

**Disclaimer! Please, read before c****_ontinuing!_**

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><p>We do not own anything, except for OC's Kevin & Brian. All material is canon to Halo Reach (excluding the fact that we replaced Noble Six), so if you haven't played them yet, stop reading to avoid spoilers. All characters from both the Halo series are properties of their respective owners. All information was acquired by means of various reliable sources. All weapon, vehicle, and brand names are also properties of their respective owners. All material is subject to change at any given time, in the story or in the disclaimer. You have been forewarned.<p>

2. A Refresher of Recent Events

BEFOREYOUREAD,READTHIS:

(Keith) Okay, first off, I should say that we WILL be replacing Master Chief with our OC's, so if you have a problem, stop reading.

**(Corey) And Serina, the AI from Halo Wars, will be being recovered at some point during the story. Maybe not this one, but one of ours

definitely.**

(Keith) Is that everything?

(Corey) Yep.

(Keith) Soo... we can start?

(Corey) Yeah.

(Keith) Alright. Then we can begin. Oh wait, I forgot to mention that SOME of the dates that follow aren't stated by Bungie, so I made them up. Now let's begin.

* * *

><p>UPDATE:

(Keith) I have decided to include the chief after all, due to my friends saying "How could you?!" So yeah. There you go. That being said, this is an edited version of this chapter, the rest of the story will remain unaffected.

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><p>September 23, 2517:

Seventy-eight children are conscripted into the SPARTAN-II program per Naval Code 45812 on Reach, two of which are SPARTANs Kevin-321 and Brian-113.

* * *

><p>September 24, 2517:

The 6-year-old SPARTAN-II trainees awaken for their first day of training. They are led by Chief Petty Officer Franklin Mendez, and are introduced to Dã@jÃ . Kevin and Brian immediately form an unbreakable bond between each other.

* * *

><p>January 17, 2525:

Humanity makes first contact when the Covenant ship Minor Transgression attacks another human ship the Bulk Discount, said human ship having the Walk of Shame in support and hosting not only Johnson and Byrne but also an arsenal of weapons. The aliens are repelled (though Johnson receives a fractured skull) and the ship destroyed, though Dadab, an Unggoy, and Lighter Than Some, a Huragok, are able to escape in an escape pod after making a report on the relics they've found.

* * *

><p>March 9, 2525:

SPARTAN-IIs undergo rigorous chemical, physical and biological augmentations. Thirty-six SPARTAN's successfully pass the alterations, thirty subjects die, and twelve are permanently

disabled.

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><p>July 13, 2526

the Covenant began an assault on Circinius IV, targeting the Corbulo Academy of Military Science with three SDV-class heavy corvettes. Locally stationed Marines provided an initial defense of the Academy and the evacuation of the cadets via the school's space elevator was begun immediately. Orbiting UNSC vessels soon deployed Orbital Drop Shock Troopers directly onto the campus. However, one of the Covenant corvettes fired on the elevator, causing it to collapse on the school and halt the evacuation. Since all the cadets and staff had converged near the elevator for evacuation, the collapse of the elevator killed many of members of the academy. SPARTAN-II Commando Kevin-321 is deployed to the planet, along with four other SPARTAN-IIs, (John-117, Brian-113, Fredrick-104, and Kelly-087) for a search-and-rescue of any and all survivors.

* * *

><p>February 23, 2531

The human ship Spirit of Fire, a Phoenix-class colony ship, mysteriously disappeared from Arcadia. The UNSC declared the ship as "Missing", along with its entire crew, including her shipboard A.I. Serina.

* * *

><p>September 18, 2532

The first year of training for SPARTAN-III's Alpha Company (the children for the project were brought to Onyx on December 27 of the previous year to determine who stayed or washed out). Catherine Elizabeth Halsey is made aware that several augmentation chemical precursors were routed through ONI, raising her suspicions that they are replicating her work.

* * *

><p>February 10, 2534

The Spirit of Fire, previously designated as "missing", was declared "lost with all hands" by the UNSC. The reason for this change was kept top secret. A memorial service was held for the people aboard the vessel, but many of the crew's family members chose not to attend, holding out hope that their loved ones are still alive.

* * *

><p>September 23, 2554

SPARTANs Brian-113, Kevin-321, and Josylin-048 form "Epsilon" team.

* * *

><p>February 14, 2535

With the destruction of Jericho VII, most major Outer Colonies had been destroyed. In order to protect Earth and the remaining colonies, the Cole Protocol was established by military order. Human ships must, when forced to withdraw, not move on to a colony-bound vector, even if that means jumping without proper navigational calculations. If blind jumps are not possible, the ship's Captain must order a self-destruction sequence if capture is imminent. In addition, it is also imperative that the powerful ship AI data cores not fall into Covenant hands, so part of this protocol involves either the removal or destruction of the ship's A.I. in extreme situations. Additionally, no captured Covenant ships or technology may be brought back to a human planet without being checked extensively for surveillance devices.

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><p>March 28, 2536

With the introduction of the Spartan-IIIs, the Cyclops exoskeleton is removed from service due to issues with its high power consumption and propulsion.

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><p>August 25, 2537

Operation: PROMETHEUS commences, consisting of SPARTAN-III Alpha Company and SPARTAN-II Epsilon team. Most of SPARTAN-III Alpha Company destroys a Covenant shipyard on asteroid K7-49, but 301 of the participating SPARTANS, including Josylin-048, are killed in the process, making their commanders doubt the SPARTAN-III's actual effectiveness in combat.

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><p>November 7, 2549

Cortana is created from Dr. Catherine Halsey's flash-cloned brain.

* * *

><p>November 19, 2549

The SPARTAN-II Program was announced to the public, and any SPARTAN who dies is to be listed as either MIA or WIA, to give the illusion that Spartans never die in accordance with the Office of Naval Intelligence Directive 930.

* * *

><p>December 15, 2549

A mandatory psychiatric reevaluation for the members of Noble Team takes place. Jun-A266 is noted as having "an unhealthy emotional detachment in regards to the consequences of his actions".

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><p>November 24, 2551

After vigorous testing by the SPARTANs of Epsilon team, the MJOLNIR Powered Assault Armor/Mark V enters service.

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><p>January 13, 2552

Kevin-321 is drafted to Noble team in an attempt to bolster their strength, so they will be prepared in case of emergency.

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><p>April 22, 2552

During the Battle of Fumirole, Noble Team member Thom-293 destroys a CCS-class battlecruiser but kills himself in the process, and Catherine-B320 loses her arm. She subsequently receives a robotic prosthetic replacement.

* * *

><p>July 24, 2552

Two months after the death of Thom-293, Brian-113 joins Noble Team as SPARTAN-293's replacement.

* * *

><p>AN:**

(Keith) Well, that was a toughie. Trying to keep all the important dates as accurate as possible, while also trying to fit our OC's into it, was difficult. I don't care who you are.

(Corey) Um... this game... is a twisted... version of all the Halo's... just in a different point-of-view... I don't care who you are... we like it.

(Keith) You feelin' alright?

(Corey) What?

(Keith) I said "You feelin' alright?"

(Corey) Yeah. Why?

(Keith) Because, you were pretty scattered on that sentence.

(Corey) I was?

(Keith) Yes. Wanna try again?

(Corey) Yeah.

(Keith) Then go ahead.

**(Corey) This is our POV of what happened... er of what our

SPARTAN's went through actually. I hope you enjoy it, like it. Can they comment and subscribe to this?**

(Keith) Yeah, in a way. It's called a "Review".

(Corey) Oh. When you're finished reading, tell us if you like it and if it needs improvements.

(Keith) Well, I gotta start writing the first chapter. Visit us soon for "Prologue: Welcome to Reach" (Yes, I will be naming chapters after the level name in the respective game. El Problemo?）

3. Prologue: Noble Actual

A/N:

(Keith) So, since Corey isn't here for this one, I guess I will be doing this chapter solo. Basically, this chapter is a transcript of "Noble Actual", the opening cutscene to Reach. However, as you guessed, and like the rest of the Halo: All or Nothing, will have mine and Corey's own personal twist. That being said, enjoy the chapter.

* * *

><p>Planet Reach

July 24, 2552, 0728 Hours

A single M831 Troop Transport, or commonly referred to by the UNSC as a "Troop Warthog," drove down a dirt trail at a considerable speed, trailed by two UH-144 Falcons. Inside the Troop Hog sat a single soldier as the Warthog's pilot. Sitting next to him was a SPARTAN-II supersoldier, on his way to meet his new fireteam. The SPARTAN, looking at his new Explosive Ordinance Disposal, or EOD, helmet, equipped with a Command Network Module, or CNM, slowly turned the helmet around in his hands. He took a deep breath, and donned the helmet.

Shortly after, the Warthog arrived at the camp, following the landing of the Falcons. The SPARTAN-II jumped out of the side seat of the Warthog, only to be greeted with the "smiling" face of a SPARTAN-III, wearing a variant of the MJOLNIR Mk.V/S Powered Assault Armor consisting of a Scout Helmet with the HU-RS attachment, a cloth around his neck, and three SRS99-AM Sniper Rifle rounds on his left shoulder, as well as a combat knife on his right. He was busy loading a clip when he saw the new SPARTAN walk past him. His response was a short sigh, followed by him returning his attention to the sniper clip.

As the SPARTAN neared the main Quonset Hut, his finely-attuned senses picked up the voice of someone who appeared to be talking over a speaker system.

"Contact with Visegrãd Relay was lost last night. All signals flatlined at twenty-six hundred hours. I responded with trooper fire teams, which have since been declared MIA." the first voice said. A second voice then chimed in, "And now you're sending us."

The SPARTAN-II neared the doorway, when the first voice answered, "The Office of Naval Intelligence believes deployment of a SPARTAN team is a gross misallocation of valuable resources. I disagree."

The SPARTAN finally reached the doorway, and decided to enter. But, before he could, he was stopped short by a female SPARTAN-III with a prosthetic arm. The SPARTAN-III wore Mk. V as well, with the Air Assault helmet and shoulder pauldrons, with an FC-I attachment. She turned her attention to a trio of SPARTANs, one of which being a SPARTAN-III, and said plainly, "Commander."

The three SPARTANs diverted their attention to the lady SPARTAN and the new guy. The two SPARTAN-II's immediately recognized him. The largest SPARTAN spoke to the others in the trio, "So that's our new number six." in a thick Hungarian accent. The new guy stepped forward, and a SPARTAN-III sitting in the background spoke to the lady SPARTAN, "Kat, you read his file?" Kat replied with "Only the parts that weren't covered in black ink."

The Commander turned his attention back to the screen. "Anyone claim responsibility, sir?" The man on the screen answered the Commander's query. "ONI thinks it might be the local insurrection. Five months ago, they pulled a similar job on Harmony. Hit a relay to take out our eyes and ears, then stole two freighters from dry-dock. That cannot happen here. Reach is too damn important. I want that relay back online, Noble One." The Commander replied with "Sir. Consider it done." The man he was communicating with closed the comm channel with "Then I'll see you on the other side. Holland out."

As the SPARTANs stood up, the Commander grabbed his Commando helmet from the table and turned to face the new SPARTAN. He called the SPARTAN by his rank, rather than his name. "Sergeant Major." The Sergeant Major replied with "Commander, sir."

The Commander continued; "I'm Carter, Noble team's leader. That's Kat, Noble Two, and Emile, Noble Four. I assume you are already familiar with Jorge and Kevin, Noble's Five and Seven?" The Sergeant Major confirmed Carter's assumption. "Me and Kevin are actually close friends." Carter gave a snort, and continued, "I thought so. Well, anyway, you're riding with me...?" The Sergeant Major finished his sentence for him, "Brian. Sergeant Major Brian-113 of the UNSC Arm..." Carter cut him off by saying "I am aware of your choice to be affiliated with the Army branch of the UNSC, however an odd decision that may be." Carter signed for Brian to follow him out.

Carter began explaining to Brian why he is here. "I'm not going to lie to you, Brian. You're stepping into some shoes that the rest of the squad would rather leave unfilled." He continued once they sat down in the Falcon alongside Kevin and the last SPARTAN that Brian had yet to be introduced to, though he assumed him to be a Sharpshooter or Rifleman. "Me, I'm just happy to have Noble back up to full strength. Just one thing. I've seen your file. Even the parts the ONI censors didn't want me to. I'm glad to have your skill set, but we're a team. That lone wolf stuff stays behind. Clear?" Carter signals for the other Falcon, carrying Kat, Emile, and Jorge, to get airborne. Brian acknowledges Carter's request, "Got it, sir." The unidentified SPARTAN-III introduced himself. "So, you're the new Noble Six, huh?" Brian shook his head "yes", and the SPARTAN continued. "Welcome to Reach. I'm Jun, team sniper." He offered his

hand to Brian, who firmly shook it. "I'm Brian, SPARTAN-II sniper of the disbanded Epsilon team. It's nice to know another sharpshooter has my back." Jun laughed at this. "Well, Kevin has told us a lot about you. I'd like to challenge you to a game of killscores, sometime." Brian smirked, "You're on." Kevin piped in when he felt he wasn't getting enough attention. "You know, I have said so many good things about your abilities and personality, and you have yet to say 'hello' to me. See anything wrong here?" Carter, starting to get annoyed, said, "Alright, Noble. Now that pleasantries are out of the way, let's try to keep the comm channel clear." Kevin attempted to argue, "But he hasn't said..." Carter cut him off. "Okay, consider that an order. Copy, Kevin?" Kevin withdrew without a word.

* * *

><p>AN**

(Keith) Well, I hope you like it, and I hope I didn't make anything too redundant. As 343 Industries said at the end of Halo 4, "A journey begins with a single step." This is only my... er... mine and Corey's first actual chapter, and I guess that makes this OUR first step on a great, great journey. I hope that we will see a long and prosperous series with the world you have left in our delicate care, (And without a word against us!). See you in Chapter 1: Winter Contingency!

4. Chapter 1: Winter Contingency

A/N

(Keith) Again, Corey isn't here for this one, but I'm still here. What? You don't like me? Ah, well, here's the story anyway. It, like the first one and the others throughout, is a rewrite of the level it's named for. Enjoy.

* * *

><p>The Falcons, callsigns Charlie 1 and Charlie 2, flew next to a mountain top at full speed. Carter, the leader of Noble team, begins his briefing. "Listen up, Noble Team. We're looking at a downed relay outpost, fifty clicks from Visegrád. We're going to introduce ourselves to whoever took it out, then Kat's going to get it back online." Kat, the intelligence officer of Noble team, commented, "Just get me under the hood, Commander." Jorge, the biggest of the SPARTAN-IIs, queried, "Sir, why would rebels want to cut off Reach from the rest of the colonies?" Kevin replied for Carter. "You get a chance, maybe you can ask them, big guy."<p>

The SPARTANs waited for the Falcons to land, when Kat said, "Commander, we just lost our signal with HQ." Carter asked "Backup channels?" Kat checked her PDA "Searching...nada. Can't say what's jamming us."

as the Falcons approached the LZ, Carter relayed what Kat said. "You heard the lady. Dead zone confirmed. Command will not be keeping us company this trip." Emile spoke to no one in particular, "I'm lonely already."

The Falcons banked left and hovered over the outpost, and closed in

on the LZ. "Shoot down attempts are likely, so keep your distance," Carter said to Charlie 1. The pilot acknowledged, "Yes, sir!" Carter continued, "Let's stay focused. Watch your sectors." The two Falcons went in two directions around the LZ, when Jorge sees the Objective. "There's the communications outpost." Kat cuts in, "Reading a distress beacon." Kevin & Brian's Heads-Up-Displays lit up with the waypoints set by Jorge and Kat. The first one read "Visegr d, Communications Outpost", while the other one read "Distress Beacon, ...Investigate". Carter replied to Kat's earlier observation, "Could be the missing troopers. Let's check it out."

Carter spoke to the pilots. "Put us down on the bluff," and the Falcons circled around for landing in response. Carter spoke to Jun. "Jun, I want your eyes in the sky." Jun acknowledged. "Sir." The Falcons landed side by side, and Carter jumped out. "Let's go, Six." Brian and Kevin both exit the Falcon along with Carter, Emile, and Kat. Jorge and Jun stayed in the Falcons to provide air support. Carter gave his first orders of the day. "Alright, Noble team. Spread out. Watch the approach." Brian follows Noble team down the hillside. About halfway down, Emile climbed a rock to get a better look at the outpost. "Structure point 3-4, looks clear from this angle." He leaped down from the rock. His shield broke from the impact, making a distinctive "ching" sound. (No SPARTAN has gone his/her life, never hearing this sound.) The rest of Noble team find another way around the cliff. As they neared the outpost, they began to hear the sound of fire crackling.** "Distress beacon's coming from just south of here, Commander. We're close," Kat alerted the Commander. Carter replied, "Roger that. Eyes peeled."

They soon come across the outpost, with a burning Warthog in the courtyard. Both it and the ground were covered in blood. Kevin remarks, "Jee-zus! What happened here? Happy hour? Or did some chick have a bad..." He was cut off when Kat smacked him on the back of the head, effectively shutting him up. Emile began inspecting a wooden palette on the ground. "Found the beacon." He tossed the beacon to Kat for closer examination. Curiously, Carter asked, "Make out any ID?" Kat replied, "Negative, but it's military."

She dropped the beacon on the ground as Jorge, over the comm, asked, "So where are the troopers?" Kat answered his question, with another question. "Why are we not seeing explosives residue?" Carter also took notice. "Noble Three, can you confirm any 'ex residue in the area?" Jun scanned. "Hmm... Negative, sir." Emile commented "Plasma, maybe." Jorge replied, "Can't be. Not on Reach." Emile, finally taking notice of the blood, spoke. "There's a _lot_of blood on the ground." After a brief moment, Carter spoke up. "All right, Noble, looks like there's nothing here. Let's move on." Noble team moved on towards a civilian structure. Kat spoke, "Smoke at the next structure, boss." Carter acknowledged. "Circle west and check it out. Noble Team: you have permission to engage, but be selective. We don't need to telegraph a presence."

They moved closer to the house, and Carter made his plan. "Noble Six and Seven, move into the house. Go in quiet. I'm right behind you." Kevin and Brian did so. Kevin called out, "Clear left." Brian acknowledged, and cleared the right. "Clear right." Carter confirmed, and called the all clear. Jun spoke over the comms, "Noble Leader, I'm seeing heat-sigs in the structure ahead!" Noble team moved quickly out of the house and into another courtyard. A farmer came out of his house, obviously scared. He began speaking Hungarian. "  n

nem csináltam semmit!" _(I didn't do anything!)_ Kevin pointed his M6G Magnum at the farmer and spoke, "Move!" Emile walked up, and continued "On your knees, _now_" But, the farmer apparently only spoke Hungarian. "Ne lőj! Ne lőj!" _(Don't shoot! Don't shoot!)_ the farmer cried. Jorge walked up behind Noble team. "They're not rebels, they're farmers. Look at them." Kevin pondered, "Jorge? When did you get here?" He replied, "Just now, actually." Carter, wanting results, said to Jorge, "Ask him what they're doing here." Jorge gave a quick nod, and questioned the farmer. "Mit kerestek itt?" _(What are you doing here?)_ The farmer began talking. "Csak nem akartunk meghalni." Jorge translated, "Hiding, sir. Neighbors were attacked last night. He heard screams, gunfire. It stopped around sunrise." The farmer continued. "Valami megölt a fiamat." Jorge continued translating. "He says something in the fields... killed his son." Carter found something off about that sentence. "Something?"

Jun interrupted their interrogation. "Commander, be advised. I'm reading heat signatures at the structure directly east from your position. Over." Carter acknowledged. "Copy that." He spoke to Jorge, "Get them back inside." He nodded in reply, and spoke; "Azt mondtam, befel! Gyere!" _(I said get in! Get in!)_

A new waypoint appeared on the building in question, and Noble team began sprinting towards it. When they arrived, Jorge spoke, "We're moving in, Commander." As they did, they found several human corpses, including two, wearing Army BDUs, pinned to a wall. Brian was first to comment. "Damn..." Jun, curious, spoke. "Fill me in, Noble team, what are you seeing? Over." Carter kneeled over the pools of blood and examined them. Avian-like footprints can be seen in it. He answered. "We've got military casualties, two of the missing troopers. Looks like they were interrogated...It's messy." He stood back up, and signaled the team to keep moving.

They enter an adjacent room with another dead body, when movement is suddenly heard on the roof, and a brief hostile contact is detected on the motion tracker. Carter points it out. "Movement. Watch your motion trackers." They head outside to ID the contact, but it vanishes.

Emile speaks. "What the hell was that?" Carter tries Jun for information. "Jun, you see anything?" He replies. "Negative. Thermal's clean." Noble team heads into the next building, and Jun spots something on the Infrared. "Boss, I see movement, outside your structure!" Carter starts barking orders. "Noble Two, move up to the west. We're about to be flanked." Before he can finish, he is interrupted by Jorge and Emile.
>"Huh?"
Damn it!
>"Covenant!"
Carter starts again. "Contact, contact! SPARTANs, assist!"
>Jorge finishes. "Here we go." Brian, Carter, and Kevin all start firing at the Kig-Yar Skirmishers, who in response, bolt towards the building, and into the basement. Carter quickly spots them, though. "They're heading into the basement. Move down to the lower levels!" Brian and Kevin both reply at the same time. "Affirmative!" They both run downstairs, past the dead body of a soldier. Kevin takes his Magnum ammo. They then engage the trio of Skirmishers, taking one down with their MA37 ICWS Assault Rifles. Kevin took the second out with a single headshot, to which he comments, "BAM! Right betwixt the eye sockets!" The third one, being distracted by Kevin's sudden

outburst, didn't notice Brian rush up behind him. Brian grabbed him by the feathers on top of his head, pulled him down to the ground on his back, and drove his combat knife straight through the throat, and out the back of the neck.<p>

Outside, a squadron of Type-26 Ground Support Aircraft, or Banshees, closed in on the Falcons. Charlie 2 spotted them first. "Banshees! Heads up, Charlie 1!" Jun spotted a small squad of Type-25 Troop Carriers, or Spirits. "Noble Leader, enemy dropships inbound!" Charlie 1 joined his squadmate in the fight. "Falcon moving to assist." They destroyed two Banshees, but the Spirits slipped by. Kevin and Brian rushed outside to engage the new wave. Carter, Jorge, Emile, and Kat joined them. Noble team ran down the hillside and across a covered bridge, eliminating every Covenant they came across. Carter lobbed a single M9 High-Explosive Dual-Purpose fragmentation grenade, or Frag, at a group of Unggoy, or Grunts, and Skirmishers. It went off, causing body parts and blood to shower the immediate area, though 2 Skirmishers survived. Jorge quickly gunned them down with his modified M247H Heavy Machine Gun, leaving them as little more than piles of bloody mush.

"Stand down, Noble, stand down. Contacts neutralized." Carter said. Jorge scoffed. "Contacts? It's the damn _Covenant_!" Emile tried to make the best of a bad. "Cheer up, big man: this whole valley just turned into a free-fire zone." Carter found no humor in what he said. "Kat, we've got to warn Holland. I need you at that relay outpost now." Jun cut in. "Boss, I'm showing more activity to the east!" Carter replied "Copy that, Jun, we're on it. Six, you've got point." Brian agreed. "On it, sir!"

They rushed across the creek to meet the threat. They were greeted by a Trio of Ultra-rank Sangheili, or Elites, and a small pack of Grunts. "Contact, contact!" Kevin called. He was the first to engage. He sprinted towards a Grunt, and smacked it in the face with the butt of his Assault Rifle, baseball style. It's head flew back, and an audible "crack" was heard. He knew he broke its neck. An Ultra rushed at him, intent on cracking his skull open, but was tackled by Carter, who proceeded to stab it in the face. Kat continuously fired her Magnum at the second Elite, while Jorge perforated the rest of the Grunts with .50 caliber bullets. Emile and Brian took on the third Elite. Brian acting as a distraction, while Emile rushed him with his Kukri knife in hand. He stabbed the Elite in the legs, breaking his energy shields, and making him buckle to the ground. He followed up with a 20 gauge shell to the face, spattering blood, skull, and brain matter all over the grass. Brian, having witnessed the grotesqueness firsthand, remarked. "Brutal, Emile. Brutal and stomach-churning." Emile replied with "You do what you have to." Brian nodded. Jun cut in again. "Commander, I'm seeing more hostile activity to the North-East." Carter gave his orders. "Emile, Kevin, you're with Kat. Brian, Jorge, and I will run interference on the ground. We'll meet you at the outpost." The trio of SPARTANs walked away from the other trio, hearing Kat over the comms. "Noble Three, requesting air-lift, over."

Carter, Brian, and Jorge moved towards a TurboGen Independent Wheel Drive "Spade", an orange flatbed truck. Brian took the driver seat, Carter in the passenger seat, and Jorge on the bed, attaching his gun to the frame of the truck, making an improvised Warthog. Carter said to the team over the comms, "Get to work, Noble." And they did. Brian drove through a small fireteam of Skirmishers, hidden between a flock

of Moa, a creature indigenous to Reach, mostly used for food, (Like the Moa Burgers.) He splattered them, leaving blood and guts all over the grass and the front of the truck. After driving around a little bit, Jun cut in. "Noble leader, I'm reading hostile activity up ahead." Carter replied. "Copy that, Jun. We're on it." Brian hung a left, and drove straight into a small courtyard, packed with Elites, Skirmishers, and Grunts. He opened up the throttle as far as it would go. The Elite heard something behind him, so he turned around, only to be greeted by the front bumper of a truck. He flopped over the hood, and nearly knocked Jorge off the back. Brian stopped the truck, and they all piled out. Brian rushed into the house, Assault Rifle in hand. He emptied an entire clip into the shields of an Elite, causing them to collapse under pressure. He took out his Magnum, and put a single bullet into the Elite's head, effectively knocking him square on his ass.

Halfway through the fight, Jun cut in again. "Noble Leader, I'm picking up a distress signal." A new voice cut in to the comms. "Mayday! 3 Charlie Six, does anyone read? We were attacked by Covenant forces. The Covenant is on Reach. I repeat: the Covenant is on Reach." Jorge finished riveting a Skirmisher with .50 cal bullets, and asked "The troopers?" Carter gave another order. "Let's move, Brian. We've gotta find the source of that distress call." He spoke after slitting the throat of a Grunt. Brian nodded in reply, and stabbed an Elite in the face. Jorge continued filling his enemies with .50 cal bullets. Jun continued. "No disrespect, but don't we have more important things to do than round up strays?" Carter replied. "We don't leave people behind. You see those troopers, you let me know." After about 15 seconds, they had finished off the rest of the Covenant in the area, and rushed back to the truck.

"Noble Leader, I'm seeing possible friendly forces under attack south of your position, over!" Jun alerted Carter. He then patched the distress signal through to the team. "We're under attack, repeat, mayday, mayday, 3 Charlie Six, we're under attack by the Covenant, I've got wounded, cannot hold this position." Carter spoke, "We need to find those troopers now. Floor it, Brian!" Brian acknowledged, and opened up the throttle as far as it would go, and then some.

After a whole 30 seconds, they arrived at the soldier's location, and jumped off the truck. "Noble Three, we've located the trooper squad. Request immediate evac. My coordinates." Carter spoke. Jun replied "Solid copy, Commander. Recalling Falcon Charlie 2. Hold that evac position."

They engaged the Grunts who were holding the soldiers down. Brian went around a rock, and up behind the small pack of Grunts. He picked off the leader with his Magnum, and before the others could comprehend what had happened, he had already taken them out. The other SPARTANS looked at him in disbelief. His only comment was "That's how you do that." Jun cut them out of their daze. "Noble Leader, be advised: I have visual on inbound Covenant dropships." Carter acknowledged. "Evac transport, keep your distance! Brian, Jorge, hold this position. Clear an LZ." The fireteam leader spoke to Carter. "SPARTANS? Corporal Travis, 3 Charlie, sir. It's the Covenant..." Carter cut him off. "We know, Corporal. Let's get you out of here."

Soon after, the dropships arrived. They dropped off about 7 Elites, 15 Grunts, and about 6 Skirmishers and 5 Kig-Yar Jackals. The

soldiers held the fort, killing about 9 Grunts and an Elite. Brian made short work of the rest of the Grunts with his newly-found Designated Marksman's Rifle, or DMR. Carter had taken out 3 Elites and 4 Jackals, while Jorge finished off the Skirmishers. Brian tripped the last Jackal, and then drove his knife straight into its heart, killing it instantly. The soldiers had made short work of 2 more Elites, but were in desperate need of an assist. Brian tackled one Elite, and gouged his eye out with his knife. Carter climbed up the back of another Elite, stabbed the top of his head, and pulled the knife across the top of his head, taking both brain matter and skull with it. Jorge finished off the remaining 4 Elites with his Machine Gun turret.

"Transport, LZ is clear. Move in for evac." Carter called.

>"Affirmative. Transport inbound." Jun replied.
The Falcons land, and pick up the team of soldiers. They head off one way, while Noble departs for the relay.

>"Noble Two, sit-rep." Carter asked.
"We're at the relay outpost. Door's locked. Mechanism's been flash-fused." Kat replied.

>"Can you beat it?" He pushed.
"I dialed up my torch, cut a way through. Going to take some time." She replied.

>Carter paused for a moment. "Okay, we're en route to your location."<p>

Noble team approached the LZ.

>"We're approaching the com outpost." the pilot said.
Carter looked around. "Drop us in the courtyard."

>"LZ's a little hot, sir..." the pilot started.
Carter cut him off. "Put her down, pilot. Brian, break's over."

Once the Falcon landed, they piled out. Brian spotted a way up, and took it. There, he found some DMR ammo, and an Armor Lockup module. He thought to himself, _Kevin would like this,_ and picked up the module. He moved to the guard rail, and tossed a Frag into the crowd of Covenant. The explosion was followed by a shower of blood, body parts, and various internal organs. A pancreas landed next to his foot, (At least, he thought it was a pancreas.) There were a few Covenant remaining, and Kevin started on the shields of an Elite. Brian started on it too, and together, they broke the shields. Carter, however, stole the kill. They didn't complain, on account of they didn't have time to.

>"How we doing, Kat?" Carter asked.
"Taking a little longer than I hoped, Commander. I've cut about halfway through the door." She replied.

>"Contact!" Emile called out.
"Hold them off until Kat can hack the controls." Carter ordered.

More Spirits appeared to drop off another wave. They were quickly dispatched by a Type-1 Antipersonnel Grenade, or Plasma Grenade, tossed by Kevin. He thought out loud. "Damn! These things are so overpowered! That's not fair! Why don't we get grenades like this?" Carter replied, "Kevin, enough!" Kevin resigned without a word.

>"Kat?" Carter pushed.
"Just about...there! We're in!" Kat said.

>"Everybody inside! Go, go, go!" Carter ordered.<p>

Brian jumped down from his perch, and ran into the relay station, just as the doors started to close, locking out the Covenant. Carter

gave a short briefing. "We need to find the control room. From there, Kat can get the relay back online. Emile, post here. If we flush any hostiles, they're yours. All right, let's do this." They proceed through the door in the back. From there, they entered a dark room. "Can't see a thing. Noble Six, turn on your night vision." Carter spoke. Brian replied, "I can see fine. I guess that's because I'm a SPARTAN-II." Carter's response was "I guess so." Kat cut in. "Control room. Go easy." Brian turned a corner and saw a dead body. It looked to have been impaled by a Type-1 Energy Weapon / Sword, or Energy Sword. Kat told him to search the body, to which he complied.

He began to search the body, and Carter found an injured soldier, and asks "Where's the rest of your unit?" The soldier replied, tiredly, "We got split. I don't think they... It sounded bad on the comms." Carter acknowledged. He told the trooper, "All right, Corporal, stay put. We'll get you a combat surgeon." Brian found a data module on the body, while Kat spoke, "Damn. Plasma damage!" Brian called, "Found something." Kat snatched the data module from Brian's hand and spoke, "I'll take that, Six. Not your domain." Jorge cut in and said "I've got a live one over here. Come on, out you come." He picked up a young girl by the arm, but she continued hitting him while yelling in Hungarian. Jorge continued, "It's all right, we're not going to hurt you." Carter, wanting results, began, "Jorge..." Jorge cut Carter off. "I've got her." He put down his weapon, and grabbed the girl by both arms. He spoke in a stern voice, "Keep still, and I'll release you." The girl shakily replied. "MÃ©g...Itt vannak." _(They are still here...) _Jorge Stiffened as a Field-Marshal Elite jumped down, and Jorge barely avoids the Energy Sword. It slashed the edge of his shields. The Marshal growled at the rest of Noble team and charges, while 3 more Zealots jump down.
>Emile calls over the comms. "What's your status, over?"
Carter replies, "We've been engaged!"

The Marshal nearly cuts Kat in half, but Carter pushes her out of the way. Brian and Kevin maintain constant fire, and the Elites shields finally collapse, but the Elite shoulders Kevin out of the way, knocks Brian down, and runs out of the door. Another Zealot grabs Brian and attempts to stab him, but Brian punches him in the face, stunning him momentarily. The Elite, unfazed, roared at Brian, and prepared to stab him. Kevin, after regaining his composure, kicked him off, and Kat opened fire, draining the Zealot's shields. Kevin then kicked an assault rifle to Brian, who dove for it. The two Zealots headed for another door, one holding the shouting Corporal as a shield. Noble team held their fire, and the civilian girl begins screaming while the Zealots head through the door. The Corporal's screams are heard as he was killed.
>"That tango blew past me. Permission to pursue?" Emile called
"Negative Four, stay on the entrance. Two, handle her. Five, Six, and Seven, clear the hole."

Brian and Kevin reloaded, and Jorge walked in to the next room. Brian and Kevin followed. Jorge Shut the door behind them. He then tossed a flare to the other side of the room in an attempt to draw out the hiding Covenant. One of the Zealots popped up from behind a crate, firing his Type-50 Directed Energy Rifle / dHeavy, or Concussion Rifle, at the team, followed by the Grunts and Jackals using their weapons. Jorge drew the fire, while Brian and Kevin snuck around. When they were close, Brian rushed the Zealot, and began climbing on him. He twisted the head of the Elite around, back and forth, until

several "cracks" could be heard, signifying the breaking of his neck. The Grunts and Jackals were stunned at how fast their leader had been killed. That was their mistake. Kevin lobbed another Plasma grenade at the group, while Brian tossed a Frag in the same group. They were all killed, and all that remained was a thick, blue mist.

They heard Covenant retreating down the corridor, and the team followed suit. They came up on what appeared to be the main computer room. Jorge spoke, "There's more. Flush 'em out, I've got you covered." Kevin jumped down and Brian took the stairs while Jorge opened fire on the group, killing about 3 Grunts, and drawing the two Zealots out of hiding. Kevin, having jumped down, found the body of a soldier. In his hand, the T45 TS Shotgun. Next to it, he found a Bubble Shield. He always found them useless. Brian, however, went straight forward with his attack, killing two Grunts and a Jackal. Jorge, who kept the high ground, riddled the rest of the Grunts and Jackals with .50cal rounds. The Elites, however, just shrugged it off, until one's shield broke. Brian took his DMR by the barrel and smacked the towering alien in the abdomen. It cringed at the pain, and Brian neatly placed a single bullet securely in his eye socket. The last Elite, holding a Sword, rushed at Brian. He saw it too late, and was about to be cut down. He watched his eyes flash before his eyes. As the Elite was about to swing, he suddenly heard a loud "bang", when the world went dark around him. Brian looked up, only to find Kevin, holding a shotgun. He spoke, "Oh, man! I am SO keeping this!"

Jorge spoke over the comm. "Noble Five reporting. Contacts neutralized." Carter replied in prompt. "Kat needs you to reset a junction. Do it and get back up here." Jorge confirmed. "Roger. Six? Seven? Do it." Kevin replied, in his usual wise-ass tone. "Sure. I'll get right on it." He moved over to the junction reset, and began inputting various passwords, but to no avail. After several minutes of trying, Carter spoke. "Five? What's taking so long?" Kevin replied before Jorge. "That's 'Seven', or 'Kevin', sir. And about the junction: it would be easier if I knew the access code, but there are only a few combinations left to try." Carter, wanting results ASAP, spoke "The code is 154982." Kevin put it in. The panel made a brief "beep", before the LCD display turned a sickening shade of green. Kevin spoke to Brian, "Well, that was fun, but I never want to do that again." He wiped the blood off of his cobalt-blue visor, and began walking back with Brian and Jorge.

A few minutes passed. Carter walked over to Kat, who was working on the comm relay's main console. He knelt down, and spoke.
>"How long?"
Kat replied, "Question of my life. If the question is when will this station be back online, two weeks, earliest."
>She explained, "This is plasma damage. All major uplink components are fried."
Carter pushed. "Two minutes is too long."
>Kat replied. "Which is why I'm splicing into the main overland bundle to get you a direct line to Colonel Holland... you're in my light, Commander."<p>

Carter stood up, and turned to Jorge. He pointed at the young girl and told him to find out what she knows. Jorge complied. He tapped the girl on the shoulder, but she shoved his hand off. Emile saw this, and chuckled to himself. Jorge ignored him, and began asking questions. "What's your name? Do you live around here?" He knelt down, and removed his helmet. "A nevem Jorge." _(My name's Jorge.)_ She replied, "SÃ¡ra." He continued, "SÃ¡ra... szÃ©p hatÃ¡rozott

nÃ©v." _ (SÃ¡ra... pretty definite name.) _ "Your accent sounds familiar. Sopron?" She replied, "Tengeri." Jorge looked over at the dead man. "Friend of yours?" She shakily replied, "Father." He offered his condolences. "Sajna! I'm sorry." She bitterly asked. "Why would you be?" He grimaced as he remembered his family, whom he had been taken from when he was six.

Emile turned to Kevin and Brian, and spoke. "Big man forgets what he is sometimes." Jorge walked past, and coldly spoke to him, "She just lost her father." He walked to Carter, and spoke to him. "She needs a full psychiatric workup." Emile spoke to himself, "She's not the only one." Carter got tired of this little feud quickly. "Lock it down, both of you!" He turned to Jorge, "Get her on her feet... the body stays here." Jorge replied, "Thank you, sir."

Jorge walked past Emile, and gave him a glare that would peel the paint off of a 2552 HuCiv Coupe. He helped the girl onto her feet, when Kat broke the brief silence. "Signal. It's patchy, but it's there." Carter looked over and said he would take it. She warned him, "Best not touch anything. You wouldn't want to ground this place." Her and the rest of Noble team, excluding Carter, left the room. A thick static came over the comms, as Colonel Holland's voice came in. "... barely getting you. What's your situation, over?" Carter spoke. "Colonel, this is Noble 1. There are no rebels. The Covenant are on Reach, acknowledge?" Colonel Holland replied, confused. "Come again, Noble One? Did you say 'Covenant'?" Carter replied, "Affirmative. It's the WINTER CONTINGENCY."

"May God help us all."

* * *

><p>AN**

(Keith) Well, that's chapter 1. Tell me what you think, please? Seriously, this took like... a month or so to write? Well, don't be expecting chapter 2 anytime soon. I will be writing it, but it will probably take a while. Hope Corey will be there to help.

5. Chapter 2: The Sword in the Stone

A/N: Drumroll please...

AFTER ALMOST A YEAR OF WAITING...

HERE IT IS! BOOK 1 CHAPTER 3! TADA!

Yeah, I know it's not that grand, and in the eyes of the average reader, I seem just like any other guy wanting to write a story. I wanted to write more than a story. I wanted to write an epic, and I may not even be able to do that in my lifetime. Which is sad.

**About this chapter... well this one took me literally forever. I have had to be juggling two duties and this in between. I need to worry about making money to eat, mostly by doing things for the neighbors and rooting on my mother for doing a job she hates. Also theres school, and the fact that we may end up on the street tomorrow or not depending on if we get lucky. But the point is I finally got

this one out. I am willing to accept that not many people read this as I had hoped, but still people do read it, and its those people who's reviews and... traffic... charts... that keep me going in my times of need. Thank you and as always, please leave a review and maybe... follow? :)**

* * *

><p>Sword Base, Babd Catha Ice Shelf, Eposz

July 26, 2552, 11:26 Hours

"I'm just saying, why is it always us that gets the hardest jobs?" Kevin began. "Surely there are SPARTANS more..."

The radio cut him off before he could finish his thought. "_Be advised, kilo-three-three and kilo-three-four, your current LZ is too hot!"_ Carter replied to the voice, "Roger that. Dot, standby to receive and respond."

The falcons flew over a large island, bringing the immediate threat into view: A SDV-class heavy corvette holding position just outside of the Sword Base perimeter.

Auntie Dot replied to and briefed the team, "Yes, Commander... coordinates received. Initiate immediate course correction. The Office of Naval Intelligence Sword Base is presently under siege from a corvette-class Covenant vessel. Due to the sensitive nature of this facility, use of orbital rounds has been, for the moment, prohibited. Regrettably, my efforts to obtain relevant data on enemy forces have been unsuccessful. However, current defensive forces are insufficient. ONI has requested Team Noble's direct intervention to help secure Sword Base."

Carter acknowledged her, "Alright people, we're stuck with that ship for the time being. Let's focus on the hostile infantry - give those troopers a hand."

Sword Command gave a quick alert to the team before they landed, "_Noble Team, be advised SPARTAN Team Black Sheep is already engaged in the courtyard. They have suffered multiple casualties and injuries, and are requesting assistance."_

Another voice cut into the radio, a girl. "_Noble Team, you're the relief workers that Sword Command promised?"_ Kevin replied to her, "Well, if it isn't Christie. How have you been since Operation PROMETHIUS?" She started "_Well if you must know, Kevin, I haven't exactly been good so far, as you can tell."_ Kevin looked over at the crashed Falcon in the middle of the courtyard, along with the two SPARTANS next to it. "So I see."

Carter interjected, "Cut the chatter, you two. The battlefield is no place for romance. Kat, Brian, Kevin - you're out here. Jorge, Emile - you're next, get prepped."

The Falcon lowers to the ground as the three SPARTANS get their weapons ready.

Kat calls to them, "Let's move, boys." as the Falcon hovers about 1 or 2 feet of the ground. They jump off and are quickly surrounded by

scared soldiers looking for a little relief. "Thank god you're here! The Black Sheep Team is low on men and need reinforcements. Their leader is over there, behind that gas can." Kat looked at the soldier and nodded to him.

"Thank god you guys finally made it. We've lost our pilot and our handler, the latter of which I'm not as sad about. Carl was kind of a dick. Eduardo was a different story. A good man."

Kat queried "Where's the rest of your team?"

Christie replied, "Scattered. The medic is just over there, caring for the wounded."

Another voice came on the radio _"I'm a Corpsman, ma'am. I worked hard for my title. I respectfully ask that you use it."_

Christie replied, "Shut it, Will, I don't need your input right now. Go help out Rick."

Kevin interjected, "No, I will help Rick, you keep tending to those soldiers, Bodybag"

William replied, _"Roger that, Shamrock."_

****_The Best Defense..._****

Carter appeared over the radio, _"Noble: push back the attack on Sword Base, find out what we're dealing with."_

Kat replied "Roger that, we're your strike team."

Kevin ran up a ramp with Kat, Brian, Christie, and a few soldiers whom had regained their confidence. When they reached the top, Kevin was rammed by a charging Elite, who insulted the downed SPARTAN "Fruqo't bluagh thugra zzi! (Damn disgusting armored bug!)" Kevin did a handspring and said, "I don't know what you just called me, but I bet it was insulting!" He removed a black hatchet from his waist, before rushing the Elite. The Elite put his hand up in defense, but to no avail. Kevin had already shoved the hatchet into the towering Sangheili's skull. It died immediately. Kevin looked over to see a Grunt, paralyzed with fear. He looked

Brian was stunned, "Since when do you carry hatchets?"

Kevin replied, "Since I started carrying this." and pulled a large machete from its sheathe across his lower back. It had the same black-titanium finish that was on his hatchets. He replaced the large blade into its black leather sheathe, and removed the hatchet from the skull of the dead alien.

Sword Control gave the team an update._ "SPARTANs, hostiles north."_

They walked to the northern edge of the platform, where they spotted a significant number of Covenant troops.

"Damn..." Kevin started.

>"I know." Brian consoled.
"What do we do, now?" a marine asked.

>"We knock some heads!" Kat replied.
"Brian go help our marksman Riley!" Christie ordered.

Brian ran across the bridge where he encountered a Grunt and a couple of Jackals. He took out his combat knife and threw it like it was a throwing knife. It hit the Jackals arm just so as to cut it off. It cried in pain as Brian took its severed arm and threw the shield at the other Jackal. It hit the Jackal hard enough to decapitate the creature. He grabbed the body before it hit the ground and took the Type-33 Guided Munitions Launcher, or Needler, out of its hand and perforated the Grunt, who had just watched in horror as his friends had been brutalized. After ten needles had been shot into the helpless creature, it exploded into a blue and pinkish mesh of blood, guts and needle fragments. He dropped the empty Needler and swapped out for his DMR, but stopped. He looked down at the severed arm of the Jackal, and had a thought. He picked it up, and removed the glove thingy. He slipped it onto his own wrist, and activated it. It glowed red, then slowly turned yellow, then softened to a crisp Covenant blue. He smirked as he deactivated it and rushed forward. When he reached the end of the platform, he found Rallo, crouched next to a side rail, with various panels that seem to act as cover for a sniper. Rallo waved him over, at which point he switched to his SRS-99 AM Sniper Rifle. He took aim, and took the head off an Elite. The bullet went straight through, bounced off the ground, and pierced the skull of an unfortunate Jackal.

On the ground, Kevin, Kat, Christie, and the rest of the soldiers were engaging the Covenant at incredible odds. The team kept close and tore through the many Grunts, Elites, and Jackals, to reach Rick. Kevin looked around before he set eyes on the SPARTAN. He called to him with a hand signal, and he and a friend waved them over. The entire team grouped up with the two SPARTANS. "Christy, I thought that there were only like five or six SPARTANS to a team. What gives?" Kevin queried.

Christie explained "Kevin, this is Jack, SPARTAN-251. He and William were both with Shadow Team, who was Sword Bases previous on-site SPARTAN team."

Jack spoke, "Me and Will are the only survivors." he said while tossing a frag into a group of Jackals and Grunts. The frag detonated and body parts went flying everywhere.

The last SPARTAN in the group took out a W/A-V M6 G/GNR Spartan Laser, and fired it after a 5 second charge up. The red beam of light impacted an Elite General, leaving a burning hole straight through. The Elite looked down for a second, then fell to his knees, and died. The SPARTAN yelled, "OH YEAH, THAT'S WHAT YOU GET FOR MESSIN' WITH BLACK SHEEP SQUAD!"

Kevin looked at Christy, "Who is that, Sally?"

She replied, "That's Acer, our EOD Specialist."

Jack commented, "I'm still better."

Kevin replied to his comment, "Jack, I think I finally found a name for you. Grenade Spammer. You friggin' grenade spammer."

Jack replied defensively, "I do NOT!" he said as he lobbed two more

frags into another group of Covenant. They went off with a duo of "Bang's!" scattering body parts all over the courtyard.

Once the courtyard was clear, Brian, Rallo, and Will headed down to rejoin the team. The group of 10 SPARTANS ran down a ramp where they encountered multiple Skirmishers and an Elite General.

"Contact! General!" Jack yelled out loud.

"Yeah, we figured that out already!" Brian yelled back, as he took aim with his sniper rifle. He fired a round straight for the Elite's head, but it ducked out of the way just at the last millisecond. "Ah, damn! Why do they all know how to dodge!?"

"Because they aren't stupid. They don't call 'em Elites for nothing." Kevin replied sarcastically. Brian fired another couple of rounds at the Elite, but he dodged out of the way each time.

Kevin, irritated, said "Oh come on, man, do I have to hold your hand your entire life?" He snatched the rifle out of his friend's hand, and fired a single round at the wall. The high-caliber bullet ricocheted off the wall and through the General's center-of-mass, tearing a huge hole through his chest armor. Brian looked at Kevin awkwardly, before Kevin handed him back the rifle.

While that was going on, the other SPARTANS quickly dispatched the Skirmishers with their various assortment of artillery. What was left were bloody piles of flesh. Kevin looked over the battle, and spoke "Huh, uh... overkill much?"
>Brian joked "I think it was more like a Kilimanjaro, don't you agree?"

Kevin replied "Oh yeah, nine bodies."
>William interjected, "So... can we get moving? It's boring here."<p>

Kat reported on the situation. "Noble Two to Sword Control: courtyard is clear, over."
>Control replied quickly. "Head to the main gate to the east, I'll brief you as you go."

The group of ten SPARTANS made their way to Sword base's front gate, where they found an impromptu armory.

"This is good... I think." Kevin attempted to converse.

"Don't think. You don't get paid enough to think." Christie joked.

"Yeah, well neither do you." Brian jumped in.

Kat, wanting to get back to the situation at hand, noted the presence of a targeting device, a single H-165 FOM Target Locator.
>"Sword Control, I see a target locator. Any artillery support in the area?"<p>

Control replied, _"Limited, but we'll prioritize whatever you need, ma'am."_

**Get the Hell Off My Lawn!**

Kevin picks up the target locator as the main gate opens up to reveal

a mountainous terrain, covered by snow and bodies. A single troop warthog is seen driving up the hill.

"Three-Echo-Five-Seven heading back to base, but we got enemy tangos on our six. How Copy?"

The hog explodes into a ball of yellow and blue, vaporizing the three marines on board. Creeping up behind it were two Type-26 Assault Gun Carriage "Wraith" units.

"TWO tanks? I... HATE... TANKS!" Kevin exclaimed.

"Then use the target locator!" Kat orders.

Kevin takes the laser pointer and locks it on to the first Wraith.

>"Acknowledged, shoot is a go, out."

The hovering tank exploded after being bombarded with seven high-yield, orbital-dropped munitions.

>"That's one!" he noted. "Where did Brian go?"<p>

While Kevin took out the first Wraith, Brian ran over to the second, and shot the gunner out. He hopped on the side, pulled the dead Grunt out, and mounted the gun turret. The confused driver spun the tank in circles for a few seconds, before finally dismounting the tank. Brian stood on the edge of the gunner seat and fired a single bullet through the back of the Elites leg, tearing it off and spattering blood across the white ground. It screamed in pain, as Brian got in the driver's seat, and drove off.

"Brian, that was insane! It was like something right outta GTA VI!" Kevin mentioned.

"You know there are newer games than that, right?" Brian teased.

"I don't call myself a classic gamer for nothing." Kevin scoffed.

"Enough, you two. It was outstanding, regardless." Kat interjected. "We got a Pelican inbound with a Warthog. Brian, Kevin, you two take the Wraith and scout ahead. Control, what's our objective?"

"The old Farragut Station has its own comms array that should bring you back online with command, while Airview Base has an anti-air battery that will help clear the skies." Control briefs.

"Alright, boys. AA gun is to the west, comms array to the east. Your choice. We'll take the other."

"What do you think Brian? Gun or phone?" Kevin queried.

"We get the gun, we can keep more enemies from dropping more troops. Let's go there." Brian answered.

"I agree, go for the gun. We'll get comms." Kat confirmed.

Brian turned the lumbering behemoth of a tank around, and used its limited boost ability to get it moving towards the west. Brian thought to himself about whether or not the Wraith could fit around

the close-quarters of the cliffside, but it proved to be just big enough. The big gun came into view, and Kevin reported.

"That is one big-ass minigun. Heh, eat your heart out, Jorge. We've made it to the gun."

"Good. There... should be a reset control somewhere. Get it online, boys." _ Kat acknowledged.

"Roger that. Try that one first, bro. I got a good feeling about it." Kevin ordered.

Brian nodded in reply, and turned the Wraith towards a small, one room building. As they moved towards it, Kevin used the plasma turret to mow down several unfortunate Grunts, Jackals, Skirmishers, and even a single Elite. Brian used the plasma mortar that the Wraith was famous for to attempt to shoot down a Spirit dropship, but with no success even after four consecutive hits.

"What the fuck? Does that thing have indestructible armor? I want indestructible armor! This armor is practically useless, except for the shields it provides! Tell me, have you seen one SPARTAN take a single hit without gushing blood all over the place? Why do we even wear this armor if it can't block a single plasma round!?" Kevin exclaimed.

"Because... it... looks... cool?" Brian attempted to reason.

"Yeah, it does." Kevin submitted. The white-and-cobalt clad supersoldier jumped down the side of the floating behemoth and stormed into the small building. He looked around, but found no reset switch.

"What the... OH, WHY IS THIS BUILDING HERE!? IT HAS NOTHING IN IT!" Kevin raged.

Brian chuckled. "Maybe we could try the important-looking two-story building over there that anyone with any amount of common sense would have tried first?"

Kevin looked over in the direction Brian indicated. "WHAT THE ACTUAL FUCK!? HOW DID I NOT SEE THAT!?"

Brian's chuckle grew into gut-bursting laughter. Kevin hopped on the "wing" of the Wraith, and Brian navigated to the building.

Kevin jumped off with his shotgun in hand. He removed his MJOLNIR Mk.V helmet to cool down in the crisp cold air. Instead, he was greeted by the aroma of blood and... is that rotten milk, or dead bodies?

>He scanned the room, but found no buttons to press.<p>

"Oh, come on! Why isn't there a button in here!?" Kevin exclaimed.

Brian, still having a good old time laughing at his best friends rage, managed to speak. "Try upstairs."

Kevin moved upstairs and was greeted by a Sangheili round-house kick to the gut. He fell to his knees and attempted to breathe. "Who...

what... did Chuck Norris himself make a dojo on your homeworld? 'Cus that was a helluva..." He was cut off by the sound of an Energy Sword being drawn. He dodged to the left, narrowly avoiding what most certainly would have been a fatal blow. He looked up, dazed, to see that his Shotgun had taken the impact.

"Oh, come on! That was a rental!" he yelled as he drew his machete from his lower-back mounted sheathe.

In a stunning display of skill and acrobatics, the Elite and the SPARTAN swung and dodged each others attacks for what seemed like minutes.

"Jesus, and I thought that the Black Sheeps were persistent! But you, WOAH!" He ducked a lunge by the Elite.

"Oh, come on man! I was about to give you a compliment. I don't do that very often! Especially to Covenant!" Kevin attempted to communicate with the Elite.

"Human, we have no need for your words of friendship. We only need for you to DIE!" the Elite spoke.

"Wait, you speak english? I thought you only spoke wort-ish." Kevin joked, referencing the Sangheilian tendency to yell "Wort, wort, wort!" before going into battle.

"A necessary skill to interrogate prisoners for information before we execute them." the Elite replied, swinging his sword at the SPARTAN, but missing and embedding his blade into the low guard-rail.

"Well, you just aren't any fun at all, are you!?" Kevin yelled, lunging forward with his machete. The Elite, unable to defend himself, moved his hand in the path of the blade. The machete cut through his hand and stuck itself deep through his forearm longways, breaking his shields. The alien howled with pain before Kevin took his sidearm, a vintage S&W .500 Magnum Revolver, and placing a single hollow-point bullet through the skull of the Elite. The bullet blasted the entire head off the alien, leaving its four jaws and a hat, spattering blood and brain matter across both the ground, and Kevin's face.

The SPARTAN forcibly removed the 18" blade from the forearm of the alien, and turned to see Brian next to a green control panel. He turned to see the gatling turret had activated and began blasting at Spirits and Phantoms.

"What... who... how... ehh?" Kevin tried to formulate a thought.

"You were taking a while up here, so I came and finished the objective. Didn't mean to interrupt your little makeout session, though. That was just a bonus." Brian joked.

"You? Doing something productive and not just camping with a sniper watching other men's asses as they trot into battle? ITS A FUCKING CHRISTMAS MIRACLE!" Kevin retorted.

"And what about you, Kevin? Always up in people's faces with your shotgun? You want oral or what?" Brian teased.

"Whatever. Fuck you." Kevin joked.

"You'd like that, wouldn't you?" Brian pushed.

"Only if your offering." Kevin laughed. "Kat, we got the gun. Its online. So... how's things? You ever gonna go on that date that I asked you on?"

"Almost got it." Kat replied. _"And if we make it out of this war alive, then maybe. But until then the answer is still 'no.' Okay, comms array is back online."_

"Noble Strike, this is Noble Leader. Get back to Sword Base, ASAP." Carter's voice came on clear as day.

"On our way, Commander. Let's move, SPARTANs!" Kat ordered.

"Good work, SPARTANs. Return to Sword Base, the rest of your team is inbound, imminent." Control interjected.

The big gun fired a volley at a nearby Phantom, destroying it. The wreckage fell on top of the Wraith and exploded, destroying the tank.

"Oh, COME ON! As if our day wasn't bad enough already! Seriously, what are the odds of that happening!?" Kevin yelled.

"Maybe it's a sign that you should work off some of that fat, lard-ass." Brian teased.

"Well, someone isn't a happy camper." Kevin joked. "Control, we need trans..." Kevin was cut off by a nearby Pelican, dropping off a Gauss Warthog. "Oh... uhh, thanks?"

"Thought you could use some mobile firepower." Control explained.

"We're not complaining." Brian commented as he walked to the driver seat of the M-12 FAV/LAAV.

"Well, I guess I get boomstick." Kevin said as he ran to the Gauss Cannon.

The two teams converged on the main gate, where they were both surprised by a single Type-48 Light Assault Gun Carriage "Revenant." It used its plasma mortar to flip the Warthog that Kat, Christie, and William were riding. As it moved into a better position to finish them off, it recieved a single magnetically propelled rail to the gun, rendering its weapon useless.

"Aww, man. Now its like a regular hover-car. I want a hover-car!" Kevin joked.

"You want, you want, you want. What about what I want? What if I want a hover-car?" Brian queried.

"You can't have one." Kevin grinned, as he placed another rail to the side of the Revenant, vaporizing the driver into a thick and gooey purple mess, and breaking the "car" into two halves.

"Aw, you see what you did now, with your constant one-upping me?" Kevin scolded.

"How was that one-upping you?" Brian asked, curious.

"I DON'T FUCKING KNOW!" Kevin yelled.

"Noble, be advised: Covenant Corvette moving into position. SPARTANS, get here quick. We need your assistance." Carter alerted.

"Great." Kevin sighed.

The two hogs regrouped at the front gate, alongside the rest of the Black Sheeps. They begin to open the gate from the panel, but run into technical difficulties. Kevin entered an 8-digit code. The panel responded with a loud BEEP over and over again.

"We're stalled in the tower atrium, Kat. Where are you?" Jun spoke over the comms.

"Trying to open the gate now! We're having problems! Kevin, whats taking so long!?" Kat queried.

"I have trouble remembering my birthday, and you expect me to remember a fucking 8-digit access code? I'm not mother-fucking Einstein, lady!" Kevin retorted.

The intelligence officer pushed him aside, and quickly entered a code. The panel chimed, and the door began to slide open. Though he couldn't see her face through the silver visor of her Air-Assault helmet, Kevin could tell that she had the largest smirk on it. It irritated Kevin to no end that he was outsmarted by her again... for the 16th time.

The group made their way through the makeshift armory and up the ramp into the courtyard where they were greeted by several grunts and another Revenant. Brian and Riley began picking off the Grunts while Kevin, William, and Jack began working on a solution to the Revenant problem. Jack took his G4H-DuSH rocket launcher, and took three seconds to target it. He fired a rocket, which propelled itself into the sky and dove into the reddish-purple hovercraft. It exploded into a ball of fire and plasma, evaporating the pilot and most of the craft.

"Oh yeah, thats totally NOT overpowered." Kevin poked fun at the Stinger-remake.

"Oh no, it totally IS overpowered. And I love everything about it." Jack replied, matter-of-factly.

"Dude, its just as useful as the Stinger from way back when. Which... now that I think about it is pretty useful." Kevin fumbled over his own insult.

The group of supersoldiers made their way into the access hall, where they found... an empty room.

"What is this, a joke? It's never this easy." Richard commented.

"You know what? He's right. Stay frosty, guys. I don't like this." Riley added.

They moved deeper into the room, Richard on point. As he infiltrated the room, he was greeted by the shield of a Hunter to the gut. It threw him against the back wall. Riley raised his rifle to the massive creature, but could not evade the massive shield that came down on his head. It broke his skull and spine in several spots, and his service tag flashed a red X, indicating he no longer had any vital signs.

"Oh, SHIT! SHOOT IT, SHOOT THEM!" Kevin ordered frantically.

The SPARTANs opened fire with everything they had, but to no avail. Their bullets merely ricocheted off the Hunters ultra-heavy shield. Kevin stopped firing and rushed the towering alien colony, and jumped off his shield onto his back. He grabbed the Hunter's "quills" and used it to confuse the colony, as they use the spikes on their back as a form of sensory organ. It began frantically swing its gun and shield at its own back, in a vain attempt to dislodge the SPARTAN. Kevin took a single plasma grenade and stuck it inside the Hunter. He leapt off the Hunter's back just in time to see the entire thing explode into a thick orange paste.

The other Hunter, sensing the death of its brother, began swinging wildly at the team of supersoldiers. In its rage, it neglected to leave its back guarded. Every chance the SPARTANs got, they fired as many rounds into it as they could. Kevin finished it off by taking his machete to the colony, splitting the remaining mgalekgolo inside. The Hunter fell over in two halves, dead.

The SPARTANs gathered around their fallen comrade.

"Oh shit, man. Just... shit." Kevin tried to come up with something to say.

"Riley, why did it have to be you? We'll all miss you." Christie said, as she removed the dogtags from around his neck.

"There will be time for mourning after we take care of Sword Base, people. We should move now." Acer said solemnly.

Richard had just gotten his breath back, and began moving slowly backwards. He could not bear the sight of his fallen comrade any further. As he was walking backwards, he bumped into something. He turned, but saw nothing but shimmering light. Before he could realize what he was looking at, he found the blade of an Energy Sword jutting out of his abdomen. He tried to utter a scream as two Spec-ops Elites and one Field Marshall uncloaked in front of his eyes, but he was interrupted as the Field Marshall sliced his head off with the energy sword. The others heard the sound of plasma-blade-through-flesh, and turned to see Richard fall to the ground, without a head.

"Oh, seriously!? SERIOUSLY!? WE CAN'T HAVE FIVE FUCKING SECONDS TO BREATHE WITHOUT BEING SURPRISE BUTTRAPPED BY A GROUP OF SPEC-OPS DOUCHEBAGS!? GOD DAMNIT!" Kevin swore profusely.

The SPARTANs drew their weapons and began firing on the three Elites. Christie fired on the Field Marshall with her MA5K. It took notice as

its shields were depleting and it rushed the SPARTAN. It swung its Energy Sword at her, but she narrowly avoided it. She cracked its jaw with the butt of her rifle, and it stumbled backwards. William rushed it with his knife, preparing to stab it in the spine with pinpoint accuracy, but was stopped by a rather short Spec-Ops Elite. It lunged at him, as he dodged left around it, and laid a hard hook into its gut. The Elite gasped for air as it fell over on its knees.

The third Elite was having a hard time with Kevin, Brian, Kat, and Jack all attacking at once. Jack took a swing at the back of the Elites head, but it moved slightly to the left, causing Jack to fumble and fall over, knocking down Kevin.

"Watch where you're... falling." Kevin tried to joke.

"Watch where you're standing, man!" Jack retorted.

"Get up, rocket-jumper!" Kevin ordered, as they both stood up.

The Elite swung at both of the SPARTANs, but was knocked off guard by a hard kick to the side from Brian. It stumbled sideways, before bumping into the Field Marshall. The commanding Elite grabbed the Spec-Ops soldier, and shoved him back into the fight. Kevin swung at him with one of his hatchets, only to miss and have it hit the ground, making sparks. This angered the Elite, as he grunted and rushed Kevin.

William laid another punch into the short Elite, who responded by swinging the Energy Sword in a downward motion, most likely in an attempt to slice the SPARTAN in half right down the middle. He managed to dodge just at the last moment, when he performed a leg sweep, knocking the Elite off balance, but not down. He took his chance and lunged at its legs with his knife.

Christie and Acer had their hands full with the Field Marshall. He swung at both of them, but Acer blocked the blade, and moved to try to break the Elites arm. It moved its arm just before the powerful uppercut could snap his bones. It kicked at Acer, but missed and kicked the wall. A sharp pain went up its leg, as it stumbled backwards. As it regained its composure, an audible scream could be heard. It sounded neither human, nor sangheilian, but instead a combination of the two.

Everyone in the room turned to the source of the scream. William had dug his blade into the leg of the short Spec-Ops Elite, who was writhing in pain. It tried to shake the SPARTAN, but only managed to have its helmet fall off, revealing short, black... hair?

The other Elites stood in shock as the black-haired Elite tried desperately to place its helmet back on its head, but couldn't on account of the Field Marshall kicking it away.

"Oss mwak, oss mwak! (Helmet, my helmet!)" The injured Elite exclaimed.

"Snkchch. Wroz huq wruq griut. Fruvax, Rha'. Hruh kiya fruqo't ghuj tugren kiv krord iuera buotq'en sha'fu. (Ridiculous. She's better dead. Come, Rha'. Let this damn blunder feel the will of the gods fire.)" The Field Marshall said to the other Spec-Ops Elite, now known as Rha'.

Rha' followed the Field Marshall out of the building, growling at Christie as he walked out.

The injured Elite tried to get them to stop. "Inax... (I can...)" but stopped, perhaps sparing herself further humiliation.

William removed his blade from the back of the female Elites leg, much to her dismay.

"Will, what was that about? You can sorta speak umm... wortish, right?" Kevin queried.

"Bits and pieces, yes. Apparantly, this Elite is female, which are not allowed in the Covenant. They left her for dead, as a punishment for the dishonor she has brought the whole Covenant Empire." William explained.

"Where did you get all that from?" The female Elite asked.

The room filled with gasps as they realized that the Elite could speak english.

"Doesn't surprise me. I've seen wierder." Kevin joked.

"We never spoke of dishonor, or the Covenant Empire. So please elaborate where you are getting your information from." The Elite explained.

William, still dumbfounded, managed to speak one sentence, "Know... research... Covenant."

"I see." The Elite regressed.

"Should we just kill her, and be done with it?" Brian asked sincerely.

"Yes, please end my suffering. It would be the least painful thing to happen to me today." The Elite responded, sarcastically.

Silence filled the room as Brian formulated a single thought. "Wow, I don't even feel like it now. She sapped the fun out of it."

"What do we do with her, Kevin? Leave her for dead? Try to get some information?" Will asked.

"Due to my secret being discovered, I no longer have a place with the Covenant. Whether you take me with you or kill me, either one would be less painful than the dishonor my family has suffered at the hands of you demons." The Elite offered.

"Jeez, why do you have to be such a bitch and take the fun outta everything? I guess we take her along since she has nothing left. Could get some useful information out of her. Bodybag, fix her up. Get some info outta her." Kevin ordered. "The rest of us have to get moving."

"Understood, Shamrock." William acknowleged. "Should we take her equipement, too?"

"Oh I don't know, maybe we should let her keep these weapons that can kill anyone she wants to with. WHAT ARE YOU THINKING, DOC!?" Kevin retorted.

"Jeez, alright, fuckbag. I'll stitch her up. Here, take this." William said as he tossed Kevin a mysterious rifle.

"Whats this supposed to be? Some kinda Needle Rifle?" Kevin queried.

"How the fuck should I know, dipshit? I'm a corpsman, not a scientist. Go figure it out for yourself if you're that curious." William snapped. "I'll take this plasma pistol."

The six remaining SPARTANS made their way across the room to the elevator, leaving William and the Elite by themselves.

"Interesting group of friends you have here. William, wasn't it?" The Elite asked.

"Don't talk to me. Don't look at me. Don't even think about me. Do not even think about not thinking about me." William warned.

"Ooh, intimidating, having to threaten an injured enemy. Real tough, human." The Elite joked. "My name is Ronhe' Jiqcuentsee... well, I guess it's just Jiqcuent now. No more Covenant affiliation."

"Why are you telling me this, Ronhuh... Rhon... Rhonda?" William asked, confused.

"I think the better question is 'Why not?' After all, you are stitching a wound that you yourself made not 10 human minutes ago. Now, why is that exactly?" Ronhe' snapped back.

"Because Kevin told me to. Now shut up before I put a bullet in your skull." William threatened.

"Go ahead. Make my day." She cameback.

"Wow, you just had to take the threat out of my threat, didn't you?" William retorted.

"It's what I do best apparantly." Ronhe' finished.

* * *

><p>The elevator was cramped. Too cramped for six people, nevermind six SPARTANS.
"Corvette's hitting this base hard." Emile alerted.

>"Where's our orbital support? Got to be four platforms that could take it out with a singe MAC round." Kat noted.<p>

**Office of Naval Intelligence**

"WELCOME TO THE OFFICE OF NAVAL INTELLIGENCE. AN ONI REPRESENTATIVE WILL BE WITH YOU SHORTLY." The automated PA system chimed in.

"I doubt that _very_ much." Kat joked.

"Just glad to see SOMETHING is still working in this place." Kevin

mentioned.

"THANK YOU, LIEUTENANT COMMANDER. YOU HAVE BEEN CLEARED FOR ACCESS." The PA system alerted the SPARTANS.

The six SPARTANS move into the tower atrium, a large, multi-level room where the rest of Noble team is already engaged with Covenant forces.

"Hold it! Everybody, move up!" Jorge commanded.

"Noble strike, what took so long?" Carter queried.

"Had a little problem that we took care of." Kat replied.

"Understood. Brian, Kevin: head upstairs and assist Emile. Jorge, make sure they get there." Carter ordered.

"Depend on it!" The three SPARTANS said nearly in unison.

They begin to ascend the multi-level room through a series of catwalks and other manner of walkways. In the first subroom, they encountered 6 Grunts and a couple of Skirmishers. Too easy. Jorge used his chaingun to take care of 5 of the Grunts and a Skirmisher. Brian took the other Skirmisher by stabbing it in the jugular. Kevin popped a single bullet in the head of the last Grunt. A group of soldiers were trapped in the room they just cleared, and so joined the SPARTAN trio.

The group maneuvered up the staircase, where they were met face-to-face with an Elite Officer. It stumbled backwards as a salvo of assault rifle bullets impacted its shields. Kevin took the opportunity to tackle the Officer, and proceed to stab him repeatedly in the face with his combat knife.

"Overkill much?" Brian joked.

"Nah, just an assassination." Kevin replied.

Kevin stood up from the Elite and the group made their way across the catwalk into a dimly lit corridor, where they met up with another trio of soldiers, six in total. The team of SPARTANS and soldiers trudged through the dark, corpse riddled hallway, where they found a rocket launcher and some rockets to go along with it. Brian took the launcher and the rockets, as well as the dogtags of the soldier who was apparently using it before them. The next room had been hit by a seemingly large explosion. No lights were active, and a couple of Skirmishers were waiting for them. One of the Skirmishers fired a couple of shots from its Plasma Pistol, one of which beamed an unlucky soldier in the face, killing him. His service tag turned red, and displayed a red X over the arrow indicating his position. The remaining troops began lighting up the room in order to kill the pests. In the crossfire, they managed to kill the Skirmishers and a cloaked Elite.

"We got Spec-Ops fuckers. Great." a soldier groaned.

"Forget about them, what about Trent?" another soldier queried.

"Trent had a wife and kids, and was killed by one stray plasma round. Thats all there is to it." the first soldier replied. "You know that no matter what happens we have a job to do, Gregg."

"Whatever, Todd. Just... whatever!" Gregg replied.

"Oh, just kiss already! You two argue like a pair of newly-weds." Kevin joked.

"Kevin, do you still have that target locator?" Brian asked, loading two new rockets into the launcher.

"Oh yeah, like I'm the kinda guy to drop something like this. Whats wrong with you?" Kevin retorted.

"Just asking." Brian replied calmly.

The team made their way through a set of doors, where they were greeted by a Phantom and several Banshees.

"Oh, thats why." Kevin stated.

He took the locator from his left thigh and began to lock onto the dropship in front of them. Before he could finish, he managed to duck a swing from an Energy Sword, held by an invisible Elite.

"Oh, crap they're invisible! I hate invisibility!" Kevin said as he took his machete and attempted to run the Elite through. He missed, but did manage to take out its shields, thereby its invisibility. The soldiers and Jorge began firing on it. It stumbled backwards as it took bullet after bullet, but inevitably dying in the end. It fell off the side of the cliff. Brian was busy taking out the various Banshees, dodging bullets, plasma, and Energy Swords. He locked on and fired, taking out the last of the Banshees. He loaded another two rockets into the launcher, only to have the end cut off by an advancing Elite. He dropped the now useless launcher, and lunged at the Sangheili. The alien took an energy sword from what appears to be its wrist.

"Oh, what!? They have hidden blades!? This isn't Assassins Creed!" Brian exclaimed.

"You having fun yet?" Emile joked.

"Fuck you! Woah!" Brian exclaimed, dodging a swing from the energy blade. The Elite lunged straight for Brian, but was stopped by a searing pain in his back. He looked down to see an Energy Sword penetrating out of his abdomen. The pain became much worse as the blade slid up the middle of his body, and out the top of his head. The Elite fell over in two halves.

"I got your back, brother." Kevin assured Brian.

Kevin took the target locator and took aim at the Phantom, which was still firing at them. It locked on, and an audible "click" could be heard.

"Fire for effect." A ordinance control officer declared, the same from earlier.

Seven high-yield explosive ordinances dropped on the Phantom, destroying it and scattering bits and pieces of it everywhere.

"That's the way we get it done, SPARTANS! Clear!" Emile called out.

"Noble team, Longswords are inbound and ready to push. Orbital defense is standing by to take the shot." Sword Control advised.

Two Longswords fly towards the corvette, which makes an attempt to flee. The team of three SPARTANS and marines watch as the Longswords follow the corvette for some distance, but soon break off. Shortly after, a single MAC round penetrates the corvette from above. Its engines flicker, and it loses altitude.

"Beautiful, ain't it? Someone should take a picture." Jorge comments on the corvette crashing into the lake in front of them. "Nice work, you two."

"We aim to please." Kevin said plainly.

"Gentlemen, get down to the science wing. Doctor Halsey wants a debrief, and commands saying we're all hers." Carter interjected.

"Repeat? Sounded like you said Halsey." Jorge said.

"I did." Carter replied flatly.

"Copy that, on our way." Jorge acknowledged. "Don't need command to tell us, right? Been all hers half our lives!"

* * *

><p>The four SPARTANS arrive at the science wing, where Carter is talking to Dr. Halsey, standing behind a shielded door. Already inside were the rest of Noble team, the remainders of Black Sheep Squad and Shadow Squad, and the injured Elite, barely managing to stand up against a makeshift crutch.<p>

"I requested your assistance, Commander, and do not need a report of events that occur on my own doorstep. What I do require is a detailed account of your previous engagement..." Halsey pauses mid-sentence when she notices the three SPARTAN-IIs enter the room.

"Jorge, Brian. Its been too long." Halsey greets the two.

"What about me, Doc?" Kevin queries.

"Not long enough, 321." Halsey replies flatly, much to Kevin's dismay. _"Visegr d Relay. Its data center was home to one of my xeno-archaeologists, Professor Laszlo Sorvad. Perhaps, you could shed some light on his death?"_

"If he was a civilian male in his mid-60s, died with a Covenant Energy Sword through his abdomen." Carter answered.

_ "Elites, then." _ Halsey deduced.

"They engaged us as well. It was just, uh, just after we found your scientist's daughter, ma'am. She was hiding in the..." Halsey interrupts Jorge mid-sentence.

_ "Irrelevant. The Elites. Tell me more about them." _

"Three. Zealot class. One got by us. The leader, from the looks of him." Jorge replied.

_ "Zealots? You're certain?" _ Halsey pushed.

"Hard to forget an ugly mug like that in my face, ma'am." Brian responded. "But yes, their armor configuration matched that of a Zealot."

"Shield strength, too." Kevin added.

"I gave the order not to pursue. Our primary objective was to get the station's relay back online." Carter mentioned.

_ "Your primary objective? Commander, are you a puppet, or a SPARTAN?" _ Halsey retorted.

"Ooh, this is where the Class-IIIs get told off for not being Class-IIs! I love this part!" Kevin whispered to Brian, who chuckled at the thought.

"Ma'am?" Carter replied, confused.

_ "There are those at ONI, myself included, who believe the Covenant dispatch Elite advance teams to hunt down artifacts of value to their religion. Survivor accounts suggest such teams are small, nimble, and almost always Zealot class. No doubt they came to the station for the abundance of ONI excavation data stored there. And you let them get away." _ Halsey scolded.

"Data retrieval was not a command directive. Even had we known, we had other, more urgent matters to attend to." Carter defended.

"Like warning the planet." Kat added.

_ "Professor Sorvad's final entry in his field notes made reference to 'a latchkey discovery.' Latchkey. Not a word he would use lightly. So lets hope that the data module your Lieutenant Commander stole contains it." _ Halsey suggested.

"Kat?" Carter asked, yet again confused.

_ "Before you ask, I was alerted the moment you attempted to access its contents, as I am with any unauthorized tap." _ Halsey explained, as she opened a bin to the other side of the shield door.

Kat placed the data module in the bin, and Halsey pulled the bin back to her side.

_ "That data is classified Tier One... I could send you to the brig for interfering with my work." _

"Maybe you'd like to join her." Carter reacted.

"...I'm sorry?" Halsey said, stunned.

"We're currently under emergency planetary directive WINTER CONTINGENCY. I'm sure you're familiar with the punishment for civilian interference with a SPARTAN deployment." Carter stated.

"Are you threatening me, Commander?" Halsey queried.

"Just making a reading suggestion, ma'am." Carter finished.

"Let's move, Noble. Black Sheep Squad, you come too." Carter ordered.

The SPARTANs and the injured Elite exited the room. Jorge stayed behind for a moment.

"Ma'am?" Jorge asked, concerned.

Halsey, still looking intently at the data module she acquired, replies simply.

"That... _will be all, Jorge."_

* * *

><p>End note: Well, this was fun. But, I guess I should explain all the new characters. Each character was created by one of my close friends, as you can tell from my profile page. They all wanted to be part of it. Now, why were Kevin and Brian so different from the last chapter? Well, as time goes on, I am fleshing out their characters more and more through what they do. Kevin is a laughing, joking numbnuts, but when the time comes, he can be serious. Brian indulges the jokes Kevin makes, and even manages to make fun of Kevin in the process. Its a relationship that only the best of friends could have... and isn't it something beautiful? You may notice that near the end, I became sloppy and lazy. That isn't entirely true. I have literally been writing since 3:00 PM. It is currently 12:25 AM. Do the math. So I apologize for the rather sloppy performance near the end... it couldn't be avoided. Well, hopefully whenever I do get around to doing the next chapter, I will be settled and more readily available for it. But for now, please leave a review and follow us. Reviews are there for a reason and that reason is to help authors become better authors. And... before you ask, no. There will be NO SEX in the All or Nothing continuity. Some of the guys I go to school with asked about it, and it pissed me off. So no. No sex. Please review and follow. Good night, everyone!

PS- You may have noticed that the title isn't Sword Base, like in Reach. I figured if I'm going to write this whole thing following the timeline loosely, I might as well give some clever titles. SOME CLEVER TITLES. Not all chapters will be as clever as others. Some of them I will just use the original title. But, I'm rambling just to stay up. Good night.

End
file.